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Wincanton Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year Ending 31st December, 1941.



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WINCANTON,
SOMERSET,
June, 1942.

TO THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WINCANTON.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1941.

1.—General Statistics.

Area (in acres)	...	...	64,540
Population (Pre-war)	...	...	17,390
Number of inhabited houses (1931)	...	...	4,361
Number of families or separate occupiers (1931)	...	...	4,385
Rateable Value	...	...	£72,680
Produce of Penny Rate (estimated)	...	...	£300

2.—Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

BIRTHS.

			Males.	Females.		
		Total	131	111		
Live Births	...	Legitimate	130	105	Birth Rate	14.2
		Illegitimate	1	6		
		Total	7	2		
Stillbirths	...	Legitimate	6	2	Birth Rate	0.51
		Illegitimate	1	—		

DEATHS.

Deaths from all causes	254	128	126	Death Rate	12.9
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Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, childbirth :—

(a) from sepsis	nil.
(b) from other causes	...	...	nil.

Deaths of Infants under one year of age :—

Legitimate	16	Illegitimate	2.	Total	18.
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Deaths of Infants under one week	6
„ „ from one to four weeks (inclusive)	5
„ „ from one to six months	6
„ „ from six to twelve months	...	...	...	1
				—
				Total 18
				—

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	...	nil
„ Whooping Cough (all ages)		...	...	...	4
„ Diarrhoea (under two years of age)		...	...	...	nil

There has not been any excessive mortality during the year.

3.—Notifiable Diseases during the Year.

DISEASE.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Diphtheria	6	5	1
Scarlet Fever	22	18	nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	nil	nil
Pneumonia (all forms)	27	nil	10
Whooping Cough	211	5	4
Erysipelas	6	nil	nil
Measles	395	5	nil
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis	4	3	nil
Tuberculosis	20	?	15
(a) Respiratory	14		12
(b) Non-respiratory	6		3

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

No case notified.

Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulation, 1925—

No action taken.

Public Health Act, 1925, Section 62—

No action taken.

4.—Causes of Sickness.

The epidemic of Measles, commencing at the end of 1939, continued throughout the early part of the year, and extended over the whole of the District. The disease attacked young children as a rule, but there were some cases in young adults. The type was a mild one, as exemplified by the fact that there were nearly 400 cases in the District but no deaths.

An epidemic of Whooping Cough also occurred throughout the District and extended throughout the year.

A few cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever occurred during the year, a disease usually occurring during a War. Owing to the new treatment by Chemiotherapy there were no deaths.

5.—Summary of Nursing Arrangements, Hospital and other Institutions available in the District.

A.—Professional Nursing in the Home.

- (1) *General*.—There are nine nurses in the district engaged in general district work who are affiliated to the County Nursing Association, and between them they cover the whole district.
- (2) *For Infectious Diseases*.—Some of the cases of infectious diseases were removed to the Isolation Hospital, the remainder were either nursed by their relatives or by nurses obtained from Nursing Homes or Hospitals outside the district.

B.—Midwives.

There are eight certified midwives practising in the district.

C.—Clinics and Treatment Centres.

In Wincanton there is one Tuberculosis Dispensary provided and staffed by the County Council.

D.—Hospitals available for the District.

- (1) *Tuberculosis*.—One at Wincanton.
- (2) *Fever*.—One at Wincanton, to which the following cases were admitted during the year.

Disease.	Number Admitted.	Number Died.
Scarlet Fever	18	nil
Diphtheria	5	1
Measles	5	nil
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	3	nil
	—	—
	31	1
	—	—

(3) *Other*.—There is one Cottage Hospital at Wincanton, known as the “Wincanton and East Somerset Memorial Hospital,” for the treatment of general, medical and surgical cases.

There is one Cottage Hospital at Templecombe, known as the “Merthyr Guest Memorial Hospital,” for the treatment of general, medical and surgical cases; in addition, there are three wards available for Maternity Cases.

There is a Public Assistance Institution at Wincanton for the aged and infirm under the Public Assistance Committee.

E.—Institutional Provision for Unmarried Mothers, Illegitimate Infants and Homeless Children.

The only Institutions for any of the above are the Public Assistance Institution and Rodber House, Wincanton (for boys only), which are under the control of the Public Assistance Committee.

F.—Ambulance Facilities.

(1) *For Infectious Cases*.—A motor ambulance is kept at the Isolation Hospital at Wincanton for the collection and removal of infectious cases.

(2) *For Non-Infectious and Accident Cases*.—A motor ambulance, built and equipped by the Wincanton Rural District Council, is kept at Messrs. The Wincanton Transport and Engineering Co., Wincanton, Tel. 3262.

6.—Laboratory Work.

Examinations of bacteriological and pathological specimens are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory at Taunton, and considerable use of this laboratory has been made during the year.

A supply of diphtheria antitoxin is kept at the Isolation Hospital, Wincanton.

7.—Public Health Officers of the Local Authority.

There is one Sanitary Inspector and Housing Surveyor, one Assistant Sanitary Inspector and one Temporary Additional Assistant (all whole time officers), a Public Health Inspector and myself (part time officers).

There are also 2 Health Visitors in the District.

8.—Water Supplies.

Bruton. A new main has been laid to serve Whaddon Farm.

Castle Cary. A main has been laid linking up the Bruton reserve supply at Pitcombe with the Castle Cary supply and there have been other additions to this system.

Wincanton. A defective main from the Wincanton collecting area has been re-laid and work on the repair of the Bayford Hill reservoir has been started.

A temporary chlorination apparatus has been installed at Salters Hill designed to chlorinate the water from the Wincanton collecting area.

9.—Drainage and Sewerage.

Milborne Port. The construction of two new sludge beds has been started.

Sparkford and Queen Camel. Additions calculated to double the sludge bed accommodation have been started as has also the work on the flushing syphon in Sparkford Street.

Camping Sites.

No Camping Sites in this District have been registered.

Generally the only cases of Camping which occurred were cases of 2 or 3 days duration.

No special difficulties in connection with Camping are anticipated.

10.—Housing.

(Particulars as regards overcrowding and as to sufficiency of houses to meet demand).

Two of the three long standing cases of overcrowding have been abated but the other, although certified by me as affecting the health of the children, has not been remedied. It is an unfortunate circumstance that, although some Council houses suitable for this family have become empty since my certification, none have been made available.

There were seven additional cases of which four were caused by the reception of evacuees officially billeted and two occurred in unfit houses requisitioned by the Council.

There are many houses in which conditions are unsatisfactory owing to the large number of persons occupying houses with a small number of bedrooms and at the same time there remain a number of houses in which the number of occupants is small in proportion to the amount of room available.

11.—Ministry of Health Enquiries.

None.

12.—Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) *Milk Supply.*

(1) Number of Producers on the Register	...	...	...	555
(2) Number of Distributors on the Register—				
(a) Distributors who are also Producers	...	...	...	37
(b) Distributors only	...	...	...	3

(b) *Meat Supervision.*

SLAUGHTER HOUSES—

Licensed 3. Registered 16. Total 19.

Air Raid Precautions.

The Casualty Services under the Air Raid Precautions Act are still up to strength and ready for any emergency.

In addition to the Six First Aid Units and Two First Aid Points there has been formed a Dressing Station in each of the 32 Parishes in the District, these are adjoining or adjacent to the Rest and Feeding Centres (where these exist); they are staffed by an Officer in Charge (usually a lady with experience in First Aid and Home Nursing), and a varying number of Helpers; equipment has been and is being supplied by the County Council, the British Red Cross Society and by local effort.

Exercises in Air Raid Precautions involving the use of the Casualty Services have been held. These on the whole have been satisfactory.

The Report of the Sanitary and Public Health Inspectors are appended.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. E. COULSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

COUNCIL OFFICES,

WINCANTON,

9th April, 1942.

T. E. COULSON, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.S.E.,
 Medical Officer of Health,
 WINCANTON, SOMERSET.

SIR,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1941.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES have been sampled quarterly with the following results—

Satisfactory	...	...	33
Not quite satisfactory		...	15
Unsatisfactory	....	...	3

Two unsatisfactory samples were obtained from Charlton Horethorne where, on the first occasion, repairs had been carried out and, on the second occasion, the reservoir had been completely emptied owing to an outbreak of fire. The next sample taken was satisfactory. These results point to the necessity of thorough flushing and cleansing of mains in similar circumstances. The other unsatisfactory sample was taken below Bayford Hill reservoir, where defects are now being remedied.

Despite the increase of population, no serious water shortage has been reported.

Private Supplies.—Five analyses have been taken of private supplies of which only one proved unfit. In this case a connection to the main has been made.

SEWERAGE.

Wincanton.—Early in January, petrol escaped from an underground storage tank and found its way into the public sewer. Strong smells of petrol vapour were discovered in many houses but fortunately no explosions occurred. House to house inspections were made and occupiers were warned. It was evident that both sewers and private drains were faulty. Owing to shortage of labour and materials, no further action was taken except to strengthen the conditions governing the issue of petrol licences in respect of new storage tanks.

Generally.—Various repairs have been carried out at Bruton, Castle Cary, Milborne Port, Pitcombe, Stoke Trister, Templecombe and Wincanton.

RIVER POLLUTION.

As a result of the pollution of streams by discharges from sewers and inadequate sewage works, it has been decided to extend services and provide free water supplies to certain pasture fields in the Parishes of Horsington and Templecombe.

HOUSING.

Owing to the shortage of labour and materials, action under the Housing Acts has been limited.

The number of unfit houses licensed for human habitation increased from four at the beginning to seventeen at the end of the year, while one licence was withdrawn owing to the unsatisfactory condition of the house.

The number of houses requisitioned by the Council for the use of evacuees increased from 42 at the beginning to 62 at the end of the year. Of the latter number 38 were unfit for human habitation and, although a small amount of repair work had been executed, their condition compared unfavourably with that of similar houses licensed.

BED BUGS.

No case of bed bug infestation has been discovered.

SCABIES.

Many cases of scabies have been notified to me and in such cases bedding and clothing have been treated at the Isolation Hospital disinfectors.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The disinfection of premises has been carried out after all cases of infectious disease. Arrangements have continued to be made for the disinfection of bedding at the Isolation Hospital, Wincanton.

SANITARY ACCOMMODATION.

Five vault closets have been replaced by four water closets and one chemical closet. Eight earth closets have been replaced by water closets. Twelve new water closets and three new earth closets have been constructed.

Arrangements have been made by the Council for the regular cleansing of pail closets at twenty-two requisitioned houses.

SALVAGE.

The salvage scheme yielded satisfactory results during the year. The collections have continued to be kept separate from the House Refuse collections. The sales results were :—

			Tons.	Value.
Paper	..	....	160	830
Iron, ex tins	...	...	104	195
Tins	....		101	99
Non-Ferrous Metals	..	..	3	70
Textiles	...	...	9	112
Bottles, etc.	...	..	22	105
Bones	...	...	15	52
Miscellaneous	...	...	5	13
			—	—
			419	£1,476
			—	—

Despite the purchase of a reconditioned Army lorry which decreased the collection costs, the total costs considerably exceeded the receipts. The cost of collection could have been appreciably reduced by more co-operation on the part of the householder. Despite the amounts collected, much material has been wasted by being buried at refuse tips. Army Units have been conspicuous offenders, but contact with the Army Salvage Inspector has led to a considerable improvement.

HOUSE REFUSE COLLECTIONS are made weekly in Bruton and Wincanton ; fortnightly in Castle Cary and Ansford and monthly in Henstridge, Milborne Port, Queen Camel and Templecombe. The methods of collection and of disposal remain unsatisfactory.

IRON RAILINGS.

In September I undertook the survey of railings in the district and prepared a schedule of 610 premises, detailing 802 items, dealing with railings, etc. estimated to weigh about 190 tons. Owners were advised and objections were considered by a Committee on the recommendation of which the Council varied the list and deleted 105 items.

Considerable parts of the Bowden and Henstridge tips have been dug out and tins and light iron stacked for removal.

INSPECTIONS. The total number of inspections was 8,105 which number included 1,600 made in the survey of iron railings.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936.

Two statutory notices dealing with a defective roof and a defective water closet have been served and complied with.

Informal action has been taken in 50 cases with satisfactory results in 44 cases.

MILK SUPPLIES.

432 samples have been taken as follows—

TUBERCULIN TESTED—115 of which 89 were satisfactory.

ACCREDITED—275 of which 160 were satisfactory and 6 were delayed in transit.

MILK TESTED FOR PRESENCE OF TUBERCLE BACCILLI—39 of which 3 were unsatisfactory and 1 gave an inconclusive result.

PASTEURISED—3 satisfactory.

The number of T.T. licences decreased from 38 on January 1st to 36 on December 31st while the number of accredited licences increased from 114 to 120.

One licence to pasteurise was granted to Messrs. Dried Milk Products Ltd. A licence to retail pasteurised milk has been granted to the Yeovil Co-operative Society Ltd.

The number of producers on the register was 556, the number of distributors who are also producers was 37, and the number of distributors 6.

Very few structural improvements of premises have been effected but attention has been given to the Articles of the Order concerning cleanliness.

Strangely enough, the greater proportion of the tuberculin tested milk is not retailed as such, but is delivered to factories where it is mixed with ordinary milk.

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

Meat inspections one day each week were continued at the Sherborne slaughterhouses until March 31st when, owing to re-arrangement of distribution areas, my district ceased to be served by these slaughterhouses. Of 104 bovines inspected, the principal condemnations were 2 carcasses, 15 heads and 24 lungs all affected with Tuberculosis. Of 86 pigs inspected, 1 carcase, 5 heads and 1 pluck were affected with Tuberculosis.

Only two slaughterhouses are at present in operation. These are attached to the two Bacon Factories at Bruton where 10,375 pigs have been inspected. The chief condemnations were 14 carcasses, 1 side, 744 heads, 251 plucks principally owing to Tuberculosis affection. Full details of condemnations are retained for record purposes. The percentage of carcasses affected in some part with Tuberculosis was 7.3.

Inspections have been made at shops and food stores but no action requiring structural alteration has been taken. 14 tins of miscellaneous foods have been condemned.

PLANS.

26 plans have been presented. Of these 23 have been approved, 2 disapproved and a decision on one is outstanding.

HOUSING RURAL WORKERS ACTS.

A scheme involving two houses was completed during the year.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION ACTS.

Following a conference of representatives of Local Authorities on January 6th, the Council decided to support an intensive drive against rats and mice. The campaign, originally scheduled to last one month, was extended and covered the period from the middle of February to the end of April. I dealt with one half of the district and during this time distributed, free of charge, about 350 lbs. of rat poison. It was arranged to continue the distribution of free bait so long as the existing stock lasted and at the end of the year over 400 lbs. of bait had been distributed to 92 premises. The principal poison used was barium carbonate in biscuit form and successful results were obtained at about 60 % of the premises treated.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

R. G. GRAY,

Sanitary Inspector.

CASTLE CARY,
SOMERSET,

January 17th, 1942.

To T. E. COULSON, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.S.E.,
Medical Officer of Health,
WINCANTON.

SIR,

CASTLE CARY SUB-DISTRICT.

I beg to submit my Report for year ended the 31st of December, 1941.

RATS AND MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT, 1919.

During the months of February, March and April, the Provision Shops and Stores and Farms in the district were visited to ascertain the conditions as to the rats and mice menace. Free baits of Phosphorous and Barium Carbonate were supplied in 260 instances. In some cases the results were satisfactory, but in other cases not satisfactory as reports were received that a number of domestic animals had been poisoned.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938.

The Shops, Stores and Hotels where foods are sold have been inspected and where defects were found to exist in contravention to Section 13 (1) verbal notices were given to the Occupiers in cases where greater cleanliness were necessary, and in cases where structural improvements are required or extensive repairs necessary, notification has been given of the defects with a written request that they be remedied as soon as National Circumstances permit. The Shops have also been visited to ascertain any infringement of Section 10 (1) and in cases where foods were found on sale that appeared to be unfit for human consumption they were seized and dealt with by a Justice of the Peace.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

All the Bakehouses have been inspected. The limewashing in them is carried out periodically. The leaky roof of one bakehouse has been made watertight. Under Section 7 (1) action has been taken in respect to three unsuitable Sanitary Conveniences at three Factories. One has been temporarily remedied. The Owner of one has given orders to a builder to remedy, and the Council has granted the Owners in the other case a period of one year to carry out the necessary work as it will entail the laying of a considerable length of iron pipe.

HOUSING (RURAL WORKERS) ACTS, 1926-1938.

I have collected the annual certificates from the Owners of reconstructed houses and forwarded them to the County Council with my report thereon. In various cases I have been in correspondence with the owners with regard to various defects in the cottages which have appeared, and I anticipate that these defects will be remedied without having to take drastic action.

SHOPS ACT, 1934.

I have not found it necessary during the year to take action with the one exception of a case under Section 10 (1) (b) in a provision shop where the temperature was too low for the Persons employed therein.

PROTECTION OF FOODS AGAINST POISON GAS.

I have visited all the shops and stores to ascertain the approximate quantities of foods and the condition under which they are stored and I have delivered to each Shopkeeper and Provision Store Keeper a copy of the Booklet issued by the Ministry of Food entitled "Food and its protection against poison gas," and I have requested that these booklets be kept at hand for reference when and if required.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. J. HAINE PADFIELD,

Inspector.

